

**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE:**

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**OCHE Announces WIRED Grants**

(HELENA) – The Office of the Commissioner of Higher Education has chosen four post secondary institutions to receive funding under Montana’s New Homestead Act: Workforce Innovation and Regional Economic Development (WIRED). The successful institutions include: Dawson Community College, Fort Peck Community College, Miles Community College and MSU-Northern. All of these institutions reside within the 32 Montana counties designated for these federal funds. The institutions will share the million dollar annual three-year allocation. The funds must be used to provide job training or assist in the development and implementation of model activities related to the bioproducts industry.

The purpose of Montana’s New Homestead Act: Workforce Innovation in Regional Economic Development (WIRED) initiative is to establish a globally competitive bioenergy and bioproducts cluster in central and eastern Montana. Partnerships will be encouraged to develop a sustainable industry in these rural areas. High paying jobs and the increase of farm income will provide stability to the economics of the region.

These educational grants encourage the colleges to partner with other colleges, K-12 schools, community based organizations, businesses, and entrepreneurs.

Additional information is available on line: <http://www.montana.edu/wochewd/>.

Questions can be directed to David Hall at the Commissioner’s Office [dhall@ocche.montana.edu](mailto:dhall@ocche.montana.edu) or 406-444-0608.

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